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February 26, 2014

Re: TEROC Position on E-Cigarette Sales

To Whom It May Concern:

The Tobacco Education and Research Oversight Committee (TEROC) is a legislatively mandated oversight committee (California Health and Safety Code Sections 104365-104370) that monitors the use of Proposition 99 tobacco tax revenues for tobacco control, prevention education, and tobacco-related research in California. In performing this mandate, the Committee provides advice to the California Department of Public Health, the University of California, and the California Department of Education regarding the administration of the Proposition 99-funded programs. The Committee is also responsible for producing a state master plan for tobacco control and tobacco-related research, and making recommendations to the State Legislature for improving tobacco control and tobacco-related research efforts in California.

TEROC supports the regulation of electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) sales by requiring vendors to obtain a tobacco retailer's license and prohibiting the sale of the product where cigarettes cannot be sold. TEROC's official position on e-cigarettes, adopted at the Committee's May 22, 2013 meeting, states:

“TEROC opposes the use of e-cigarettes in all areas where other tobacco products are banned.”

Local ordinances have been enacted by numerous California cities and counties that regulate the sale of e-cigarettes in the same manner as other tobacco products.

Introducing e-cigarettes into clean air environments reinforces the act of smoking as socially acceptable, and makes enforcement of existing laws that protect the public from secondhand smoke difficult due to the similarities with cigarettes. Early data has shown that e-cigarette emissions can contain carcinogens and toxic chemicals, which may result in additional harm to the public.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the percentage of U.S. middle and high school students who used e-cigarettes more than doubled from 2011 to 2012, from 4.7 percent to 10.0 percent. In 2012, more than 1.78 million middle and high school students nationwide had tried e-cigarettes.

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The CDC study also found that 76.3 percent of middle and high school students who used e-cigarettes in the last 30 days had also smoked cigarettes. With emerging tobacco products like e-cigarettes on the rise, this vulnerable population needs protection from exposure to these products.

For these reasons, TEROCC supports efforts to regulate e-cigarette sales.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please do not hesitate to contact me at MOng@Mednet.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Ong', with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael Ong, M.D., Ph.D.
Chairperson